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NSC BRIEFING

25 March 1954

THE KAREN INSURGENCY IN BURMA

- I. Announcement new Karen state points up Burma's continued insecurity.
  - A. Many insurgents still active.
  - B. Karens largest group.
- II. Karens of Thai origin, number 3 million.
  - A. Live in Irrawaddy delta and east Burma hills.
  - B. Long persecuted by Burmese.
  - C. Many Karen leaders Baptists.
  - D. In contrast to Burmans, fought Japanese.
  - E. Most Karens demanded autonomy when Burma independent.
  - F. In 1949 proclaimed own state, Kawthulay, in east Burma. New state probably satellite of Kawthulay.

NSA review completed

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G. Karens fine fighters; 5-7,000  
in field.

III. Karens have big supply problem.

- A. Weapons came from Karen army  
defectors, OSS, captures.
- B. Last two years aided by Chinese  
Nationalists, rebuffed Communist  
aid offers.
- C. Hurt by Nationalist evacuation;  
some Karens recently surrendered.

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D. Communist strategy; united front, undermine economy, tie down government forces.

V. Chinese Communists busy.

A. Have agents among Kachins and Shans, tribes to north of Karen area.

B. The tribes number over 1-1/2 million; resent rule from Rangoon, but only few have rebelled; some of latter in China.

VI. Danger they and other tribes join Karens and Communists.

A. Resulting coalition couldn't win military victory.

B. But ensuing chaos might result in Communist takeover in Rangoon.

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C. Communists have front party  
there that stays clear of  
. insurgents.

1. These stayed above  
ground when largest  
group Commies rebelled  
in 1948.

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